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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 2381
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 1866
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 2574
RUENAAA/SECNAV WASHDC
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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 000806

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, G, G/OES, AIAG C.PATTERSON
NSC FOR E.PHU
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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [TBIO](#) [AMED](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: NAMRU-2 -- MEDICAL RESEARCH UNIT'S DAYS MAY BE
NUMBERED

REF: A. JAKARTA 804

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 673 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Ambassador Cameron R. Hume for reasons 1.4 (b+d).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST: The days of the Naval Medical Research Unit in Jakarta (NAMRU-2) may be numbered. The Minister of Health is actively campaigning against it, the media are giving increasing play to her wild accusations and legislators are calling for the unit's closure (ref a). The silence from Washington regarding further negotiations is being interpreted as a loss of interest in NAMRU's future. Both GOI and USG are rapidly losing control of the issue. If we want to keep NAMRU here, we must resume negotiations on an MOU governing NAMRU's operations as soon as possible. Mission again requests the Department provide a substantive response to the Indonesian draft MOU text submitted for USG review in November 2007. END SUMMARY AND ACTION REQUEST.

[1](#)2. (C) NAMRU has long had detractors here, but many have recognized its assistance to national health authorities in identifying and studying tropical diseases. That perception is gradually eroding. The few leaders within the Indonesian government who have supported NAMRU's continued operation are increasingly fighting an uphill battle against opponents who see it as an infringement on Indonesian sovereignty and accuse it of nefarious activities.

[1](#)3. (C) Lacking legal status since the termination of the previous MOU in 2000, NAMRU had been able to operate normally until March 31 when it received a letter from the Ministry of Health that prohibited sample sharing with NAMRU. This move seems to be linked to Indonesia's dispute with the World Health Organization over the handling of human avian influenza specimens.

[1](#)4. (C) Reftels have detailed the increasingly hostile campaign of Health Minister Supari against NAMRU. President Yudhoyono has so far failed to reign in the outspoken minister, a possible sign that opponents are gaining the upper hand. Supari has called NAMRU an intelligence and weapons-research arm of the USG. Several legislators have echoed this charge, some going so far as to call for NAMRU's closure. The issue is beginning to catch on with the press

and is taking on a life of its own (ref a). As reported previously, President Yudhoyono was known to disagree with Supari's allegations but declined to take action. The deteriorating public climate now makes such a move increasingly risky for him politically.

15. (S) Questioned about the case, Foreign Minister Wirajuda said on April 21 that NAMRU researchers had no need for immunity because NAMRU was a research unit, not a diplomatic mission. Wirajuda noted that the USG-proposed text insisted on diplomatic immunity for all U.S. NAMRU staff. Wirajuda's remarks are his first public statement on the issue, to our knowledge. They also raise the stakes significantly. From the start of the negotiations it has been understood between the two sides that this was the most difficult issue, and would be the final issue to be resolved. Given that Wirajuda's ministry has the lead on the MOU negotiations, his bringing this negative view out into the open represents a setback for the U.S. position.

16. (S) Presidential adviser Dino Djalal, perhaps the primary champion within the GOI of keeping NAMRU in Jakarta, was considered to hold the keys to the decision on diplomatic immunity and other potentially unresolvable issues. Given the delay in Washington's response, however, Djalal has become increasingly frustrated. He now is also coming under direct public attack, with one legislator, after asserting NAMRU was a U.S. intelligence operation, accusing Djalal of receiving benefits from the USG in return for his support.

17. (C) It is not clear whether the situation can be reversed. The only hope of doing so, however, now lies in quick and dramatic progress toward agreement on a new

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Memorandum of Understanding. This would give President Yudhoyono a reason to undercut Supari and her supporters. It would also vindicate those key officials in the GOI who have gone out on a considerable limb to work with us in the belief that NAMRU benefits Indonesia.

HUME